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VCNAA June 10, 2020
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Carol McGranaghan (Chair), Carol Irons (Vice Chair), Andrea Brett (Secretary), Hillary Hoffman, Eugene Rich, Beverly Little Thunder

Members Absent: Jennifer Morton

Guests: Phil Brett, Rep. Brian Cina (Chittenden 6-4) (by phone), Paul Fassler, Maxwell Krieger (ACCD), Jennifer Lavoie (DHCD), Aaron Marcus (Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Diversity and Equity Committee), Jess Robinson (VDHP)

The meeting was brought to order by Carol McGranaghan at 1:08 pm virtually through the GoToMeeting platform. Following initial greetings, Jess Robinson and Jennifer Lavoie briefly discussed the processes by which the meeting should be conducted in a virtual environment.

1. Changes to Agenda

Carol Irons suggested that the commission review several items from the Old Business section of the March meeting to see their status. Andrea Brett also requested that she be able to briefly discuss Native-centered summer programs. Carol McGranaghan made a motion to accept the changes to the agenda and Carol McGranaghan seconded it.

All other commissioners voted in the affirmative.

2. Recognition of Guests

The guests and commissioners introduced themselves and were welcomed.

3. Approve March 11, 2020 Minutes

Carol McGranaghan moved to accept the March meeting minutes without substantive changes. Andrea Brett seconded the motion. All other commissioners voted in the affirmative.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Legislative Updates/ Abenaki bills- Representatives Brian Cina (Chittenden 6-4)

Rep. Cina began by reviewing the work he and colleagues have done with the Commission over the past four years, noted successes such as the passage of Indigenous Peoples' Day in the Legislature. He then summarized the status of several pieces of proposed legislation pertinent to the Commission and the Abenaki at-large. He stated that the proposed legislation waiving hunting and fishing license fees for members of the four State-recognized Abenaki tribes (H.716) passed the House after some spirited debate and would likely be taken up by the Senate.

He also noted that the legislation adding Abenaki names to select Vermont State park signs (H.880) he proposed on behalf of the Commission is on the legislative schedule but has yet to be taken up by the relevant committee. Rep. Cina stated that the best way to encourage the committee to take up the bill is by having a sustained level of advocacy and unity among all Abenaki stakeholders. Toward that end, Carol McGranaghan noted that she had sent around a draft letter to be submitted to the legislative committee of jurisdiction for concurrence and approval. After some wording changes, Carol McGranaghan made a motion to accept the letter as written and to disseminate it to the four tribal chiefs for their signatures. Caron Irons seconded the motion. All other commissioners voted in the affirmative.

Finally, Rep. Cina stated that while legislation establishing a reconciliation taskforce would not be taken up this year, he suggested that the Commission work to prepare a solid proposal and build advocacy for the bill over the coming months so that the legislation could gain traction early in the next biennium. The commissioners thanked Rep. Cina for all of his hard work on behalf of the commission and Abenaki.

NEW BUSINESS

1. By laws draft discussion/adoption - Carol McGranaghan & Beverly Little Thunder

Carol McGranaghan submitted two items for inclusion in potential VCNAA by-laws for consideration by the commission. A discussion about the overall form and content of by-laws ensued thereafter. Maxwell Krieger, council for the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, offered to research by-law templates that would be appropriate for the commission, and also summarize applicable Vermont State Governor's Commission rules for potential inclusion as well. Given that additional work and deliberation regarding commission by-laws was needed, Beverly Little-Thunder made a motion to table the consideration of these items and discussion of the by-laws until Mr. Krieger can provide the additional resources. Andrea Brett seconded the motion. All other commissioners voted in the affirmative.

2. Status of VCNAA applications and options for membership - Jess Robinson

Jess Robinson confirmed with the Governor's commission office that there have been no recent applications submitted for potential appointment to the VCNAA, despite the call for applications on the website being up for several months and several announcements on the VCNAA Facebook page. He also summarized the current and upcoming openings

on the Commission. He stated that in the event that there are not enough applications to fill the open seats at the end of August, current commission members may retain their seats until a suitable replacement is found and appointed by the Governor, but that he was not certain how would Commissioners who would otherwise be term-limited decide among themselves who retained their seat and who left in that event. Dr. Robinson asked Commission members to encourage tribal members or other people that had an interest to apply.

3. Indigenous Feminist Anti-Imperialism opportunity/request - volunteer?

Paul Fassler contacted Beverly Little-Thunder to state that the speaker series has been postponed, but that he would still appreciate her inclusion on the speaker committee when it resumes.

4. Discuss workshops for teaching Native American heritage

Carol Irons stated that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all plans and potential sponsorship for these workshops have been put on hold. She is hopeful that after everything normalizes, planning and sponsorship for the workshops can resume and that they can take place in 2021.

5. Announcements

- a. Jennifer Lavoie summarized the schedule of meetings for the 2020/2021 session and also stated that she would add an August 12 meeting to the schedule, per the Commissioners' request.
- b. Called on by Carol McGranaghan, Aaron Marcus stated that they were recently given permission to disseminate a regular newsletter to the Agency of Natural Resources on topics of racial diversity and equality. He welcomed and material or ideas for further reading that could be included in upcoming issues of the newsletter.
- c. Andrea Brett state that the Governor's youth program s being hosted this summer and it would be an opportunity to disseminate knowledge about Native Americans. She would follow up with more information.

Carol McGranaghan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Eugene Rich seconded the motion. All commissioners voted in the affirmative.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:44 PM.